



Written Testimony on Behalf of the Connecticut State Library H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023

February 17, 2022

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and Appropriations Committee members:

I am writing in support of both Connecticut public libraries and Governor Lamont's proposed allocation for the Connecticut State Library. I am pleased to see that the funding for the State Library is maintained, and not cut as it has been for the last ten years—thank you!

As an adult services librarian in a public library, I recommend and use the resources provided by the State Library on a daily basis. ResearchIT CT is a collection of research databases licensed by the state, and accessible to anyone with a Connecticut library card. Having this collection available means that I do not have to spend money on similar products for my patrons, allowing me to divert my materials budget for other items. It also lowers the bar of inequality between the public libraries that "have" and those that "have not." Through these databases, I am able to assist patrons in finding the right resources for their questions—be it for employment, school, or personal interest. I also find professional development materials for myself, as the State Library is also the librarian's library.

FindIT CT is the state's in-progress library catalog, with the goal of linking together all public library catalogs (and some participating academic libraries), so that the search process for the right book or other item is easier and streamlined. I use this to help track down hard to find materials, things that my library and consortium members do not own, or to obtain multiple copies of titles for book clubs. Not only do interlibrary loans provide excellent customer service to our patrons—so many times I've heard a patron exclaim with delight "I never thought you'd find that!!" or "now all 20 of our book group members have a copy"—it also is a resource saver. Not just money, but actual, physical materials. With the push to be more sustainable, to create less waste, being able to share library resources means we are putting less strain on the environment. Another part of this system is the interlibrary loan software that allows us to quickly request and loan materials, without as much administrative work—the days of calling another library, waiting for someone to look for the item, calling back, then waiting for it to be sent are long gone. Now the process is almost as easy as "adding to cart" when online shopping.

The State Library also provides a delivery service (DeliverIT CT) that gets those interlibrary loans to requesting libraries, and then back home again. Patrons are not obligated to drive across the state to get a book they need; they don't have to even drive to the next town if they'd rather wait for the state service. This also lowers the bar of inequality between those with reliable transportation and those without, and cuts down on vehicle traffic (and emissions!) on our roads.

With this maintained budget, the State Library can continue to offer the same programs, services, and support as it has last year, including helping public libraries across the state especially with what I outlined above. Public libraries serve the public, a.k.a. the taxpayers of this state, in providing education, entertainment, and information for all ages—from newborns to the eldest of our seniors. It is clear that supporting the State Library means supporting all of Connecticut's residents. I urge the committee to enact the Governor's proposal for the Connecticut State Library with no changes.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Sullivan, MLS

Head of Adult Services, Woodbridge Town Library

Public Libraries Section Chair, Connecticut Library Association